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 FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA
 TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4082
 INFO RUQMBI/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI 3481
 RUEHDO/AMEMBASSY DOHA 3455
 RUEHJU/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 2918
 RUQMKW/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 5095
 RUQMMT/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT 2628
 RUEHRH/USELO RIYADH 1595
 BT
 S E C R E T MANAMA 01777

EXDIS

DEPT PLS PASS TO MIL ADDRESSEES AS DESIRED

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: OREP PREL MARR GCC BA
 SUBJECT: STAFFDEL BINNENDIJK: JULY 3 MEETING WITH
 CHIEF OF STAFF, BAHRAIN DEFENSE FORCE

1. S - ENTIRE TEXT

2. I TOOK SENIOR SFRC STAFFERS HANS BINNENDIJK AND WILLIAM ASHWORTH TO MEET WITH BRIGADIER SHAIKH KHALIFA BIN AHMAD AL-KHALIFA, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE BAHRAIN DEFENSE FORCE, AT BDF HEADQUARTERS ON JULY 3. LTCOL SHAIKH AHMED BIN SULMAN AL-KHALIFA, ASSISTANT CHIEF OF STAFF FOR INTELLIGENCE, COMIDEASTFOR ADMIRAL ADDAMS, AND EMBASSY POL/MIL OFFICER ALSO WERE PRESENT. DURING THE HOUR-LONG MEETING, BRIGADIER KHALIFA WAS CORDIAL AND APPEARED PLEASED TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO STAFFDEL. NEVERTHELESS, HIS RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS WERE OFTEN VAGUE AND EVASIVE, AND HE TENDED TO RESPOND TO QUESTIONS WITH QUESTIONS OF HIS OWN RATHER THAN WITH ANSWERS.

3. ASKED IF THE RECENT GCC CHIEFS OF STAFF CONFERENCE HAD DISCUSSED THE DEFENSE OF TANKERS IN THE GULF, BRIGADIER KHALIFA SAID THAT THE PROTECTION OF TANKER TRAFFIC HAD BEEN ADDRESSED AND SOME PLANS HAD BEEN PUT INTO EFFECT. WHEN PRESSED TO ELABORATE ON THESE PLANS, ESPECIALLY ON THE ABILITY OF THE GCC TO PROTECT TANKERS THROUGH THE USE OF TACTICAL AIR POWER, THE BRIGADIER RESPONDED THAT HE COULD NOT TALK ABOUT THE CAPABILITIES OF OMAN AND THE UAE IN THE LOWER GULF, BUT OBVIOUSLY CONDITIONS WERE BETTER IN THE UPPER GULF. LATER, IN RESPONSE TO MORE PRODDING, BRIGADIER KHALIFA INDICATED THAT DEFENSE OF THE LOWER GULF AND THE LACK OF AN ADEQUATE EARLY WARNING SYSTEM IN THE UAE HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BY THE GCC CHIEFS OF STAFF. HE SAID HE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF THE USG RECEIVES A REQUEST (HE DID

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NOT SAY FROM WHOM) FOR AWACS OR OTHER EARLY WARNING
COVERAGE OF THE UAE.

4. IN FURTHER DISCUSSING GCC MILITARY COOPERATION, THE BRIGADIER STRESSED THAT THE GULF STATES COULD HANDLE THE PRESENT MILITARY SITUATION. IF, HOWEVER, THE STRAITS WERE CLOSED OR MINED OR IF IRAN ACHIEVES A MAJOR BREAK-THROUGH (NOT DEFINED), THE GCC WILL NEED OUTSIDE HELP. IN THE LATTER CASE, HE SAID, GROUND FORCES REPRESENTING ALL THE GCC COUNTRIES WOULD MOVE INTO KUWAIT. AIR COVER WOULD ALSO BE PROVIDED, BUT NOT ACTUALLY DEPLOYED TO KUWAIT BECAUSE OF A GCC SHORTAGE OF FIGHTER AIRCRAFT. ASKED IF THE MOVEMENT OF GCC FORCES INTO KUWAIT WOULD BE MERELY SYMBOLIC, BRIGADIER KHALIFA RESPONDED THAT HE COULD NOT COMMENT ON THE PROJECTED SIZE OF THE FORCE. THAT, HE SAID, WOULD DEPEND ON THE NATURE OF THE THREAT.

5. THE BRIGADIER CLOSED DISCUSSIONS WITH A MILD LECTURE ON THE NEED FOR THE USG TO SUPPORT ITS FRIENDS. HE STRESSED THAT WHILE U.S. MILITARY FORCES SHOULD NOT BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE GULF, THE USG SHOULD COOPERATE WITH THE GCC IN SUCH AREAS AS INTELLIGENCE SHARING, MILITARY TRAINING, AND THE PROCUREMENT OF ADVANCED WEAPONRY. HE CHARACTERIZED THE U.S. ARMS RELATIONSHIP WITH BAHRAIN AS DISAPPOINTING, CITING THE DIFFICULTIES BAHRAIN HAS HAD IN PURCHASING THE HARPOON AND AIRCRAFT. HE ASKED IF THE USG'S ATTITUDE TOWARD ARMS SALES WOULD CHANGE AFTER THE NOVEMBER ELECTIONS.

6. COMMENT: THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME I HAVE BEEN IN A MEETING WITH BRIGADIER KHALIFA WHERE HE WAS THE SENIOR GOB OFFICIAL. HE WAS CLEARLY UNCOMFORTABLE IN THIS ROLE. MY GUESS IS THAT HE WAS LESS THAN FORTHCOMING WITH INFORMATION FOR TWO REASONS: (1) HE WAS CONCERNED THAT AS A GOB SPOKESMAN HE WOULD SAY THE WRONG THING OR CONVEY UNINTENDED SIGNALS AND (2) HE WAS EMBARRASSED BY QUESTIONS ON THE GCC MILITARY MEETINGS PRIMARILY BECAUSE THEY DID NOT PRODUCE MUCH.

7. FURTHER COMMENT. BRIGADIER KHALIFA'S REMARKS ON U.S. ARMS SALES UNDOUBTEDLY REFLECT THE BDF CHIEF'S FRUSTRATION AT NOT GETTING EVERYTHING HE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ON AN EXPEDITIOUS TIMETABLE. HIS REFERENCE TO

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HARPOONS CAME AS A SURPRISE. I AM NOT AWARE OF ANY BACKGROUND ON THIS. I AM SURE THAT HIS REFERENCE TO AIRCRAFT REFLECTED BDF UNHAPPINESS OVER THE LONG ROUTE TOWARD ACQUISITION OF F-16 AIRCRAFT. END COMMENT.

8. KUWAIT MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. LEIDEL
END OF MESSAGE

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